

Alexis Soul-Gray: Pink Skipping Rope

Exhibitions on January 18, 2024



Alexis Soul-Gray: Pink Skipping Rope
24 January – 12 May, 2024
The Arts Club
40 Dover Street
Mayfair, London, W1S 4NP

The Arts Club London presents a solo exhibition featuring new works by British artist Alexis Soul-Gray. Curated by Amelie von Wedel and Pernilla Holmes of Wedel Art, the exhibition will feature approximately 15 works, including 6 new paintings made for the show, spread over The Arts Club's first floor drawing rooms. The show will be open to both members and the public from 25 January – 12 May 2024. Soul-Gray is a recent MA graduate of London's Royal College of Art, having also studied at Camberwell College of Arts and The Royal Drawing School.

Her extraordinary works combine painting, drawing, collage and alchemy to explore key themes around family life: love, grief, generational trauma, inherited dysfunction and their deep-seated influences on our feelings, perceptions and actions as adults. Recalling Sigmund Freud's concept of a falsified image, used to locate suppressed true feelings, Soul-Gray's canvases evoke the complexities of both authentic and constructed identities.



Alexis Soul Gray, *A Crown of Thorns*
(Oil on linen, 35.5 x 30.5 cm, 2021)

Among works to be included are *The Waves at Biarritz 2*, 2023, a painting of long-haired, athletic women on an abstracted semblance of seaside. It comes from a series of multi-media collages Soul-Gray constructed during the pandemic, then recreating them large-scale on canvas. Another key work is *Guardians*, 2023, which started as a memory painting of Soul-Gray's mother, who passed away when the artist was 25. Initially featuring a likeness of her mother, the surface was then bleached, rubbed and reworked over two years, moved from studio to studio until the work was completed with two delft-blue protective guardians, conjuring fairy tales of the past and giving the piece its name.

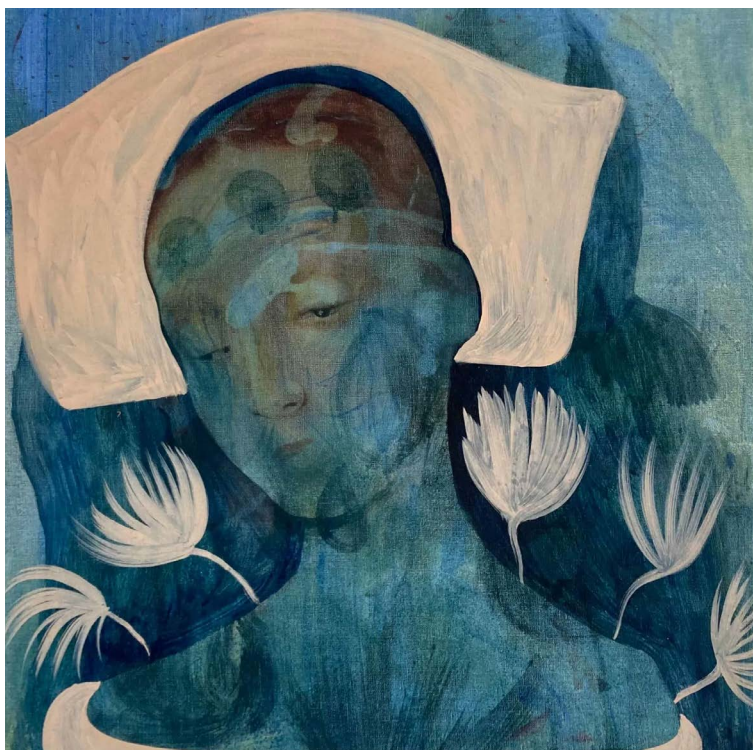
Soul-Gray hoards a vast and ever-growing collection of found objects that appropriate 20th century imagery depicting women, children and families from books, magazines and car boot sales. She seeks out clichéd tableaux that vaunt supposed feminine ideals, purposely selecting the most contrived. To break through the surface of these stylised arrangements, Soul-Gray disrupts, defaces and reorders her subject's façade – rubbing, scraping, or using caustic chemicals like bleach. She also incorporates playful mediums, such as vintage stencils that are reminiscent of a bygone analogue era, juxtaposing them with her internal processes and personal experiences.

Honing in on details of figures, she often tweaks expressions to reconstitute their understudied, piercing humanity. Resulting images are both lustrous in colour and simultaneously washed away, veiled in different swathes of colour, saturated into the canvas – giving way to an eerie beauty.



Alexis Soul Gray, Pink Skipping Rope
(Watercolour, pigment, embroidery transfer, acrylic, ink, spray paint, oil and gold on linen, 45 x 55 cm, 2020)

Alexis Soul-Gray, Artist comments “My work is a means of puppetry, helping me to articulate versions of a particular experience or narrative that needs to be told. It speaks to the different facets of my identity, as a mother, as the woman I have aspired to be and the woman I am today; alongside the perfection, loss and bewilderment that this can lead to.”



Alexis Soul Gray, Pilgrim
(Oil and bleach in linen, 55 x 50 cm, 2022)

ART PLUGGED
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The exhibition will go hand in hand with the publication of Soul-Gray's first book – *Immutable Fragments*. The text is an attempt to understand and to reconcile the relationship between the found image, painting and the loss of a mother. Designed by Ella Gold, the book will be published by Bel Ami in late January 2024.

Alongside Alexis Soul-Gray's exhibition, visitors will also be able to view The Arts Club's permanent art collection which is drawn from around the world and spans several decades – from George Condo to Albert Oehlen and Tomas Saraceno – the collection demonstrates cutting-edge contemporary practices, shifting ideas between generations, as well as the enduring concerns in art and humanity that transcend the ages in our rapidly changing world.

**Alexis Soul-Gray: Pink Skipping Rope opens on the 24th of January until the 12th of May, 2024
at The Arts Club**